



# JOB SEARCH HANDBOOK

Edgewood College  
Career Services  
Madison, WI

Looking for a job that will lead to a rewarding and enjoyable career that fits your personality, skills, and needs can seem like a daunting task, or downright impossible. This can take a lot of time and energy, but if your focus is right and you know how to handle it, you can end up with a job that works for you with minimal pain and suffering along the way.

Lucky for you, these tips and strategies will give you a plan for how to approach finding a job, and will help make your search as effective as possible.

## **Step 1: Prepare Job Search Support Materials**

In order to conduct a successful job search, you will need:

- **A strong resume** (make an appointment with career services or refer to our Resume Guide and examples in order to make your resume the best it can be)
- **A cover letter or letter of application** specifically tailored to the position you are applying to (we can help you with this too)
- **List of 3-5 references** (academic and professional)

- List of references should include names, titles, addresses, and phone numbers of contacts
- If possible, obtain letters of recommendation
- **Copies of your current transcript**
- **Support materials/portfolio**
  - This can include any research you have done, papers that show your writing/research ability, special certifications you've received, conferences you've attended, and any other information employers might be interested in

## **Step 2: Research Target Marketplace and Make Contacts**

**Research employers/organizations.** This reflects your interest in a company, and is often a critical element of evaluating an applicant. It's important to find information on the industry, organization, and position. Some things to look into include:

- What is the facility's status in the industry?
- Is the company growing or downsizing, large or small, national or regional?
- What is the organization's mission statement?

- What is the public image of the facility?
- What can you learn about the job you want?
  - Duties, work environment, salary, benefits
- What is the history/present/future of the company?

## **How to Find Information about Employers:**

- Online Resources:
  - [The Riley Guide](#): A great place to start for many aspects of your job search
  - [Idealist.org](#): Lets you research non profit organizations
  - [Wetfeet.com](#): Provides brief overviews of companies in a variety of industries
  - [Corporate Information](#): Allows you to search by industry or company name
- Professional Associations: These typically hold regular meetings and publish periodicals, and are good resources to learn about a particular organization as well as the industry as a whole.
- The Employer: The company's Human Resource department can send you their annual report and literature about the company, including important information, such as the company's mission, the type of people they employ, the organization's growth prospects, and other important information.

- Media Resources: Look through websites, trade and professional journals, business periodicals, websites, and newspapers for articles on organizations you're interested in.
- Alumni Contacts: Graduates of Edgewood College who work in a certain field or for a certain organization may be able to give you information that you might not otherwise be able to find. Use Career Services, Faculty, etc. to get in contact with someone who can help you.

### **Develop Contacts.**

- Networking: The process of making one-on-one contacts in an ever-growing circle of individuals who can give you advice, tips, hints, guidance, leads, and support.
  - Over 70% of all jobs filled are done so through networking.
  - Tell as many people as possible that you're looking for a job!
  - Networking is using any/all of the personal and professional contacts you have
- Informational Interviewing: A good way to gather information about a field or organization in a comfortable and informal setting. These are usually initiated by the job seeker (you), and involve talking to someone who works

in the industry or field you are interested. This is a good way to get a better idea of what it is like to work in a certain profession on a day-to-day basis.

Personal Contacts: Everyone you know is a potential contact for your job search. Don't limit yourself! Personal contacts include:

- Family members
- Friends
- Everyone in your address book
- Every internship/externship supervisor you've ever had
- Every employer you ever worked for

## **Step 3: Create a Game Plan/ Quality Control System**

Planning: Because you will likely be in contact with a lot of different individuals at several different organizations, it's important to stay organized, and to set and reach goals, when in the midst of your job search.

- Set aside time for planning
- Establish target date for getting a job
- Start a notebook with contacts' names, addresses, etc. and with notes about different organizations

- Create a checklist of tasks you want to accomplish, and check them off when you do
- Try to make a designated area in your home for career related information

### Keep Really Good Records:

- Make information such as positions applied to, interviews held, resumes sent, and correspondence sent/received easily accessible and very organized. This could end up being a lot of information before you find the right job!

### Create a Contact/Target List:

- Find out the name of the contact person you should send your resume and cover letter to, preferably the head of the department you want to work for (instead of human resources or personnel)
- Call the department directly (or ask to be transferred there) to ask for this information, and to verify spelling of the person's name, credentials and title.
- Make sure your records are up to date

# Step 4: Contacting Employers

## By E-Mail or U.S. Mail:

- Verify contact information
- At any given time, do not send out more than 5-10 resumes
- Customize and tailor cover letters to reflect a unique interest in each position you apply for; accompany each resume you send out with a cover letter
- Use high-quality, matching paper for your resume and cover letter. White or cream-colored are best. Do not staple the two together.
- If you have not heard from the employer, follow up with a phone call in 10 days.

## By Phone:

- In order to make this contact less stressful, make a script or outline ahead of time to refer to when making the call.
- If someone referred you, be sure to mention this person early in the conversation
- Do not be impolite or impatient to anyone in the organization, especially receptionists and administrative assistants.

## In Person:

- Try this if you don't mind being assertive, speaking to strangers, and can handle rejection easily

- Be prepared for a job interview on the spot-dress professionally in business attire
- Do your research so you know who you have to see
- If you can't meet with the appropriate person, leave your resume and let them know you will contact them again in a few days.

### Responding to Classified Ads and Job Postings:

- Separate yourself from the crowd
- Call (if the contact information is listed) to find out as much as you can about the position and the qualifications they are seeking
- Tailor your resume and cover letter to specifically fit the position and company. Be sure to show a unique qualification for the job and/or a special interest
- Never mail your resume and cover letter without getting the name and address of a contact person—call the organization to get this information
- Wait 7-10 days after you send in your resume and cover letter before you call the contact person for a follow-up
- Ask if they received your resume, and if they have any questions
- Try to schedule an interview at a convenient time; if they are not currently scheduling interviews, ask when they expect to schedule them
- Express interest in the position

## **Step 5: Feedback**

- Rejection letters are inevitable-don't take them personally! There will be lots more opportunities in your future
- You can turn a rejection into something positive-call each person who sends you a rejection and thank him/her for their consideration
- Ask for feedback on how to improve your resume, interview skills, etc.
- Ask for referrals for other organizations or people who might be hiring
- Try to get at least 2-3 suggestions from each person who sent a letter
- The idea is to keep learning and improving your skills

## **Step 6: What to do while waiting for an interview**

- Join professional organizations and attend meetings to expand your network and contacts
- Do some informational interviews to learn about opportunities in the field, as well as what it's like to work in a certain organization or field
- Read professional journals and publications